

ject to terms and conditions set by funding bodies, students may have to temporarily suspend their scholarships or study loans during their time off. Can universities provide scholarships or stipends that would partially support the students' financial needs during their sabbatical?

If the gap year is an elective option, there might only be a brave few who step up to the challenge. How might universities reward the students for their effort? Can the students' gap year experience, for instance, be translated into course credits, which would help them fulfill graduation requirements? The universities should consider setting up incentives to encourage a greater number of students to take up a gap year during their studies.

ISSUE #5: ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PROGRAMS

Volunteering programs abroad with a university's international partners can complement existing plans for a gap year. It would be a good way to increase the number of domestic students participating in outbound student mobility. As such, the gap year should be integrated with the university's existing internationalization strategy. The faculties, academic management office, and international office have to coordinate their efforts and work together so that the gap year becomes an institutionwide internationalization activity.

In recent years, students have been exposed to basic know-how on entrepreneurship, and are required to carry out minientrepreneurial projects as part of their learning. The Malaysian government has even gone one step further, by providing fee waivers to students who wish to set up companies during their studies. Are the students allowed to set up companies and work on their business ventures during their gap year?

Malaysia will incorporate a gap year as part of its undergraduate curriculum.

ISSUE #6: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Universities have to have clear strategy on engaging their internal and external stakeholders. It is clear that implementation necessitates the participation of several key stakeholders. Community leaders provide input on the appropriate projects to be carried out, becoming enablers for the students' community-based pursuits. The university career office has to revisit existing skills development modules in order to help students prepare for their gap year.

Industry players should understand the concept of gap year, and be committed to providing enriching work experience for students. Additionally, clear mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation have to be established in order to ascertain effectiveness of implementation.

These issues aside, the ministry's effort in introducing a gap year policy should be lauded. The idea is exciting, and one that could work—provided there is adequate information, clear communication, and good guidelines for those involved. In the long run, it might be a good way to address graduate employability of students from public universities, who are purported to be behind their peers from the private universities in terms of “soft skills” required for employment. ■

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2017.89.9765>

Is There a Benefit to Importing a Branch Campus? Research Capacity in Abu Dhabi

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Many local and national governments, driven by desires to become more economically competitive, seek to develop their local research capacity. There are a variety of approaches undertaken to advance this interest. Some seek to build the capacity of existing institutions, while others are pursuing new strategies, such as building new domestic institutions or importing international branch campuses (IBCs) of research-productive institutions.

Few governments have expansive enough resources to undertake multiple approaches to building research capacity. The few that do, provide opportunity to compare the results of multiple approaches. One such location is Abu Dhabi, the largest, most populous, and wealthiest emirate in United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is the location of more than 20, mostly private, higher education institutions,

some of them IBCs, and most created in the last 15 years. Therefore, it serves as a case to better understanding the resultant research contributions of investments in public, private, and foreign institutions.

We focus particularly on New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), an IBC established in 2008, which had an early research expectation. Before the first students were admitted, the NYUAD Institute was created to support the research of NYU faculty in the UAE. Today, the Institute promotes cutting-edge and innovative research through the support of its 12 centers and laboratories. Because of its early research focus and support, NYUAD is an unusual example of IBC; but, as an outlier, it is a good test case for looking at potential research contributions.

In order to begin to understand this issue, we used bibliometric data available from Elsevier to track the quantity and quality of research outputs from each of the higher education institutions in Abu Dhabi. This data provides information about the total number of publications produced by faculty at each institution, as well as the relative quality of those publications, as determined by a Field Weighted Citation Index (FWCI), which can be a way to compare the quality of an institution's citation performance, controlling for differences in disciplinary profile, publication age, and publication type.

RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY IN ABU DHABI

When we look solely at the number of publications produced by institutions in the UAE between 2011 and 2015, Abu Dhabi is clearly the leading emirate in terms of research productivity. Of the top ten most productive academic institutions in the country, six of them are located in Abu Dhabi, including the top three.

In Abu Dhabi, UAE University (UAEU) comes out on top with more than 3,000 publications. UAEU is the oldest and largest institution in the country, founded in 1976 just after the country was created, and has long been viewed as the nation's public research university. The next three most productive institutions (Khalifa University, Masdar Institute, and Petroleum Institute), each privately governed and partially publicly funded, have more than double (or nearly double) the number of publications of the fifth institution, NYUAD, the only IBC in the top five, which began its research efforts at about the same time as Khalifa and Masdar.

Of note, the branches of the French business school INSEAD and the Sorbonne, both in Abu Dhabi, register much lower levels of productivity, with fewer than 20 publications each.

ASSESSING RESEARCH QUALITY

When we look at publication quality (FWCI) for the ten largest institutions, the outcomes shift and we begin to see

the potential influence of the IBC connections. The institution with the highest quality indicator in the UAE is Masdar, followed by NYUAD. UAEU drops to 4th place. While the IBCs have not been as productive in terms of the quantity of publications produced, NYUAD does seem to deliver high quality. What is it about an IBC that might lead it to have higher indicators of quality than other domestic institutions?

CAPITALIZING ON ACADEMIC CAPITAL

Part of the benefit of importing an IBC is that it can benefit from the academic capital of the parent campus, possibly allowing it to develop a quality research culture more quickly than newly created domestic institutions. NYUAD does not produce as many research publications as the home campus and it probably never will. However, NYUAD's quality indicator has fluctuated around the same level as that of

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the home campus and actually was higher than that of the home campus for three of the last six years. It is not possible to draw a firm conclusion on this one case, but it may be that there is an expectation of quality in terms of the type of publications and where publications are published, that spills over from the home campus to the IBC. In addition, the established name of the home campus, whose coattails the IBC clearly rides, may also help to lift the attention that its publications receive, relative to colleagues of newly established, and less well known, domestic institutions.

COLLABORATIONS

For NYUAD, international collaboration on publications was around 80 percent in 2015, significantly higher than the home campus. The leading international collaborator, by far, is the home campus—providing more evidence of the IBC benefiting from the home campus affiliation. In addition, it appears that faculty at NYUAD most frequently collaborate with international institutions often considered in the top tier of international rankings, such as Harvard University, the University of Oxford, and Shanghai Jiao Tong University. This suggests that the networks to which the faculty of NYUAD have access may contribute to their relatively higher quality indicators, compared to their local peers.

CONCLUSION

The number of publications produced by an academic institution does not fully represent the research profile of an organization; but it can provide a quick snapshot of the relative level of productivity and quality among institutions, and a sense of institutional commitment to academic publishing, a typical component of the research enterprise.

This singular case indicates that research-focused IBCs may not have an inherent advantage over domestic institutions in terms of research productivity when measured by the quantity of the output. However, that does not appear to be as true when looking at an indicator of research quality. In this case, NYUAD jumped to the second place of the ranking. This may be due to the academic expectations that are carried over from the home campus, the ability to leverage the established name of the home campus, and the access to networks that local institutions may not have.

Interestingly, however, the only local publication collaborator of NYUAD is Masdar University, which has both more publications and a higher quality indicator. If a benefit of importing IBCs is to build local research capacity, the absence of local collaborations is a question for further exploration. While more information is needed to unpack the research contributions of IBCs, the bibliometric data suggest that they are not necessarily a quick way to build local research capacity. ■

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2017.89.9766>

Higher Education in South Sudan: Living with Challenges

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South Sudan, which attained its independence from Sudan in July 2011, has one of the smallest, but most problematic higher education systems in sub-Saharan Africa. The world's newest country has five public universities—the University of Juba, the University of Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile University, Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Science and Technology, and Rumbek University—with nearly 20,000 students, including 1,040 graduate students. There are also four “project” or “proposed” public univer-

sities: the University of Western Equatoria (Yambio), the University of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Torit University of Science and Technology, and the University of Bantiu.

Exacerbated by conflicts and a lethargic economy, the system is confronted with several challenges, characterized prominently by poor physical infrastructure, underfunding, and severe staff shortage. These weaknesses have heavy implications for the capacity of the universities to function. The failure of public universities to meet the enormous demand for tertiary education has encouraged the emergence of an unregulated private university sector in the country. South Sudan has 13 private universities, but only four of them are recognized.

The focus here is on the experience of the five functioning public tertiary institutions. Faced with extant problems, the institutions have limited options but to live with the challenges. Four main approaches underline the sector's resilience: dedicated staff, institutional partnerships, a supportive tertiary governance structure, and international assistance.

DEDICATED STAFF

In 2012, there were only 721 faculty employed at the universities, which suggests a comparatively moderate student: lecturer ratio of 28:1. But the universities experience a considerable shortage in qualified academics. With 66 percent of the students, Juba University, the largest tertiary institution in the country, lost 561 of its staff, northern Sudanese, at independence. Similarly, significant numbers of faculty of Upper Nile University and Bahr el Ghazal University, the post-1991 institutions, remained in Khartoum when the universities were returned to the South in December 2010.

Moreover, the system is dominated by unqualified faculty. For example, in terms of academic qualifications, only 86 of all academics held a PhD in 2012. Furthermore, staff profiles, compiled the same year, revealed that only 36 faculty were full professors, while 62 were associate professors, 76 assistant professors, 242 lecturers, and 262 teaching assistants. To run the academic programs, universities recruit part-time tutors. Thus, 31 percent and 60 percent of Juba and Bahr el Ghazal lecturers, respectively, were part-timers in late 2016. The staff situation at the other three universities is equally alarming.

Nonetheless, the universities employ some of the most educated, experienced, and talented workforce in the country. Rigorous university recruitment procedures insulate the institutions from the corrupt practices inherent in the civil service. More importantly, the commitment of the academics to the institutions underscores their ability to impart knowledge and provide other vital services. The dedication of the academic staff mitigates the threats posed by the lack of qualified faculty. For example, a Bahr el Ghazal's